sequence causes aggregation of the metal surfaces associated with said TBS, thereby causing surface enhancement of a SAS associated with one or both of the metal surfaces, said metal surfaces being ineffective to cause surface enhancement in the form in which they are present in the detection agent to which said sample is exposed, and aggregation of said metal SER(R)S surface being dependent on the presence of said target nucleic acid in said sample; and,

(b) observing the sample/agent mixture using SER(R)S to detect any said surface enhancement.

5. (Thrice Amended) The method as claimed in claim 1 wherein each component of said detection agent comprises monodisperse unaggregated colloidal metal particles associated with a TBS comprising a nucleic acid or nucleic acid analog which is complementary to all or part of the target sequence.

15. (Twice Amended) A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein more than one target sequence is determined using detection agent components having distinguishable SAS.

Cancel claims 2-4 and 20.